



Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

This safeguarding policy outlines the responsibilities of Hand in Hand Physiotherapy to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and young people in their care. It provides a framework to identify, prevent, and respond to safeguarding concerns in line with statutory guidance and best practice.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all interactions between the physiotherapist, children, young people, and their families, whether in a clinical setting, school, home, or community environment. It aligns with legal requirements and national safeguarding frameworks, including the *Children Act 1989* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.

3. Principles

- **Child-Centered Approach:** The child's welfare and best interests are paramount.
- **Prevention:** All possible steps are taken to prevent harm or abuse.
- **Protection:** Appropriate action is taken to safeguard children from harm.
- **Partnership:** Work collaboratively with parents, carers, schools, and external agencies.
- **Accountability:** Maintain transparency and adhere to professional and legal responsibilities.

4. Responsibilities

Awareness and Training:

- Stay updated on safeguarding policies, legislation, and best practices.
- Undertake regular (annual) safeguarding training.

Safe Practice:

- Always act professionally and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Ensure safe, respectful, and comfortable environments for children during sessions.
- Obtain informed consent from parents/guardians for all treatments.

Recognizing and Responding to Concerns:

- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation (e.g., physical injuries, behavioral changes, or concerning disclosures).
- Follow the reporting procedure if there is a safeguarding concern.

5. Types of Abuse

The policy covers all forms of abuse, including:

- **Physical Abuse:** Deliberate harm or physical injury.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment causing psychological harm.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involvement in sexual activities, exploitation, or grooming.
- **Neglect:** Failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs.

6. Reporting Procedure

If there is a safeguarding concern:

1. Record concerns accurately and promptly, including details of the child and observations.
2. Share concerns with the appropriate safeguarding authority or designated safeguarding lead in any associated institution (e.g. school).
3. Contact social services or local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) if necessary.
4. In an emergency or if a child is in immediate danger, contact emergency services (999 in the UK).

Confidentiality: Information will only be shared with relevant professionals on a need-to-know basis, in compliance with data protection laws.

7. Record Keeping

- Maintain secure, detailed, and accurate records of all sessions and any safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure records are stored securely and only accessible to authorized individuals.

8. Code of Conduct

- The physiotherapist will always behave professionally and avoid situations that may be misinterpreted.
- Wherever possible the physiotherapist will not conduct sessions in private spaces without another adult (chaperone) present. Where this is impossible, for example if parents are unable to attend regular appointments in school and no school staff can be spared, the session must take place with open doors and specific consent from guardians.

- Children will never be asked to undress without an adult chaperone present. There will be times when a chaperone must accompany a child, for example if reviewing the position of the spine. This will be discussed with parent/guardians as necessary.
- The physiotherapist will always respect cultural and individual differences. Please inform your physiotherapist of any needs they may not be aware of.

9. Working with Other Agencies

Collaborate with schools, healthcare providers, and child protection agencies to promote safeguarding and ensure holistic care for children.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or professional guidance.

Date of Policy Implementation: December 2024

Date of Next Review: December 2025

Contact Information

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): LADO@nottscc.gov.uk
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Emergency Services: 999